

around the county

In Mt. Hood Forest

Illegal wood sales increasing

"Wood for sale" classified advertisements are being read by a wider audience in recent years — an audience which may include district officials and special agents for the U.S. Forest Service.

John McCormick, special agent for the Mt. Hood National Forest, spent some time combing such ads to compile an estimate of a problem he deals with increasingly: wood theft from national forest lands.

McCormick, who works out of the national forest office near Gresham, had his staff clip "wood for sale" ads from the Oregonian, the Oregon Journal and the Gresham Outlook classified sections.

He said that in one day there were 130 separate listings of firewood for sale. "Now let's play a math game," he said, drawing out a pocket calculator.

"A cord of wood equals 500 board feet. If each one of those advertisers sold one cord per day, that's 65,000 board feet per day," he continued. The agent explained that wood is selling at \$500 to \$1800 per thousand board feet.

This means, he continued, that between \$1 million and \$3 million worth of wood is sold every month through these three newspapers' ads alone — and this assumes that only one cord per day is sold through each advertisement.

"We know that some people are wood brokers, and sell far in excess of that," McCormick said. "Some woodcutters deal in very large volume."

The agent said he had no estimate on how much of the wood being offered for sale was obtained on forest service lands; nor did he have a specific figure on the how much was obtained legitimately and how much was cut without permits.

But he is certain, he said, that "a lot of people are

abusing the forest service's free use program to cut firewood."

The national forest issues free use permits which allow the holders to remove the holder to remove up to 10 cords of firewood from forest service lands for personal use only.

Abuses of those permits come in several forms. To be valid, the permits must be signed at the district's ranger station and must be accompanied by a current map.

The maps are used to route woodcutters to areas which need cleanup of logging slash and to protect other areas, McCormick said.

The agent said that when he is patrolling the forests and encounters groups of woodcutters, most have their permits unsigned.

He also described a problem with many holders of valid permits taking wood far in excess of the amounts allowed. "That one is very difficult to prove," he said, "but when we see them out there with two-ton trucks or bigger, and when we see them again and again, it's obvious to us that there is

wood theft involved."

One complication is that there is confusion on the part of the public as to where forest service lands are, McCormick explained. "With some people it's legitimate confusion, and some others take advantage of the situation," he said.

An abuse which district rangers and the special agents are encountering more and more often is the cutting of standing trees, McCormick said.

The free use program was designed to clear the forest of logging slash by allowing private citizens to cut up the

wood on the site and carry it away. Whenever a standing tree is cut, the woodcutter is

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TMC

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Gordon Pearigen of the Zigzag Ranger Station and deputy sheriff Dean Hartley examine a pile of cord wood which was confiscated from woodcutters. The wood was obtained il-

legally from U.S. Forest Service land, a problem which has increased greatly during the last few years.

Hoodland happenings

Annual Sweetheart Ball slated

Thursday, Feb. 12
Welches Community School Council will meet this morning at 10:30 a.m. at the Hoodland Women's Club on Salmon River Road. The Community School will be taking a new direction this term, according to coordinator Reva Cox. Persons who are willing to share their interests or skills, make suggestions for activities or help the community council plan the program should attend.

A Senior Citizens lunch sponsored by Loaves and Fishes will be served at 11:30 a.m. at the Welches School library. Transportation and further information can be obtained by calling the Senior Center, 622-3331.

Friday, Feb. 13
The Mt. Hood Pre-School Co-Op Inc., a non-profit organization, will hold a Valentine's Day bake sale from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at both the U.S. Bank in Hoodland Plaza and the Clackamas County Bank in

Wemme on Highway 26.

Saturday, Feb. 14
Valentine's Day.
The Wy-East Artisans Guild will open a new gallery in Rhododendron today. Their grand opening celebration, offering refreshments and prizes, will be held Friday, Feb. 27; Saturday, Feb. 28; and Sunday, March 1.

The Hoodland Women's Club's annual Sweetheart Ball will be held tonight from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at the club building on Salmon River Road. Music will be provided by Tim McCarthy and Sound Circus Band. Tickets will be sold at the door. Refreshments will be available and door prizes awarded. Call Betty Hoffman at 622-4863 for further information.

A Valentine's Day party for residents of Timberline Rim and their guests will be held this evening at the Timberline Rim clubhouse beginning at 8 p.m.

Monday, Feb. 16
No classes today at Welches School because of Presidents' Day.

Tuesday, Feb. 17
There will be a "Keep-Well Clinic" for senior citizens at the Hoodland Women's Club on Salmon River Road off Highway 26 in Zigzag from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Call Maxine Worley, 622-3331, at the Hoodland Senior Center for further information.

The Chamber of Commerce will meet this morning at 7 a.m. at the Red Lion Inn at Bowman's.

Wednesday, Feb. 18
Welches Community School Tiny Tots group will meet from 10 a.m. to noon. Call Connie Westly, 622-3073, for information and meeting location.

The Clackamas County Library Bookmobile will be at the Mt. Hood Food and General Store (formerly the Mt. Hood Food King Market) parking lot in Rhododendron

from 2 to 3:30 p.m., and at Ted's Brightwood Store from 4:30 to 7 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 19
A senior citizens lunch sponsored by Loaves and Fishes will be served at 11:30 a.m. in Welches School library. Transportation to the lunch can be arranged by calling the Senior Center at 622-3331.

The Mt. Hood Pre-School Co-Op will hold its monthly parents meeting tonight at 7 p.m. in the Hoodland Women's Club building. The guest speaker will be auctioneer Tom Cox.

The Mountain Music Society will meet this evening at 7:30 p.m. to discuss plans for upcoming programs and activities. Call chairperson Will Frank, 622-3130, for location of meeting and further information.

To place an event in "Hoodland Happenings," call Dawn Morrison at 622-3538.

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Accidents, calls keep Hoodland firemen busy

Hoodland firefighters were kept busy with first aid and rescue calls over the last week, including several auto accidents which took the life of one man and caused serious injury to two others.

Merrill Lee Robinette of Mulino was killed late Saturday evening one mile west of Government Camp on Highway 26 when the car he was driving left the highway.

A passenger in the car, John Michael Holmstead of Portland, was taken to Gresham Community Hospital, where he is under intensive care.

Robinette's car was west-bound when it crossed the highway, hit the guardrail and rolled 150 feet below the road surface, according to

reports from the Oregon State Patrol.

In another accident, Dennis Rockway of Brightwood was badly injured when his car went through a break in the guardrail on Highway 26 near East Hummingbird Lane and plunged into Wildcat Creek.

The Rockway crash occurred early Friday morning, Feb. 6. He was taken to Portland Adventist Medical Center, where he is in serious condition.

In addition to providing first aid at the scene of these accidents, the fire district responded to three other auto accidents, a home first aid call, a flue fire and three walk-in first aid calls.

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